REGISTER OF CLASSIFICATION DECISIONS

Date of entry in Register:	03 July 1998
Name of applicant/court:	Roald & Valmai Bank
Applicant to the Labelling Body:	Not Applicable
Title of Publication:	Child's Play
Other Known Titles:	Not Stated
Director:	Tom Holland
Producer:	David Kirschner
Publisher:	Not Applicable
Author:	Not Applicable
Format:	Video Recording VHS/PAL
Country of Origin:	USA
Language:	English

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Components of film originally examined:

Feature:	Child's Play	Running time:	83.10
Trailers:	Copyright Warning Notice	Running time:	0.29
	Warner Home Video Notice		0.12
	Sneak Preview Notice		0.11
	Classification Notice		0.12
	Lethal Weapon 2		1.17
	Classification Notice		0.12
	Licence to Kill		0.53
	Classification Notice		0.11
	Tango & Cash		1.19
	Relentless		1.55
	MGM UA Notice		0.18
		Total Running time:	90.19

Excision/Alteration: No.

Reason(s) for Excision:

Not Applicable.

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Classification Decision:

Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 16 years.

Display Conditions:

Nil.

Descriptive Note:

Contains violence and offensive language.

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Direction to issue a label has been given on 02 July 1998

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SUMMARY OF THE REASONS FOR DECISION:

The video recording *Child's Play* is classified as:
Objectionable except if the availability of the publication is restricted to persons who have attained the age of 16 years.

It was submitted to the Office of Film and Literature Classification (Classification Office) under s13(1)(c) of the Films, Videos, and Publications Classification Act 1993 (FVPC Act). It is an American production which contains a feature component and several trailers and notices. The feature is essentially of the horror genre and is peppered with depictions of acts of violence. The plot is based on the premise that the soul of a criminal enters a popular children's talking doll at the point of the criminal's death. This doll is given to a child, Andy, as a birthday present. The doll's soul must be released into the body of the first person he reveals his true identity to, that person being Andy, if he is to survive. The doll tries to take over Andy's body on several occasions and also attempts to kill or injure anyone who stands in his way. Together Andy, his mother, and the police attempt to thwart the doll's plans.

The classification is due to the depictions of the infliction of serious physical harm and the context in which they are set. The depictions of the infliction of serious physical harm are scattered throughout the video recording. The degree is limited and blood or wounds are depicted only briefly. Many depictions present as unrealistic. The context is one of a horror film with a young boy as the main character. This serves to create a sense of vulnerability in the viewer. However, a suspension of belief in reality is imperative if the recording is to be effective.

The Classification Office considered the applicants' reasons for submitting the publication, under s4 of the FVPC Act. The Classification Office surveyed media and

academic literature with regard to the possible effects of violence on young persons. Although no causal links were established there seems to be some agreement that there is a correlation between watching depictions of violence and increased aggressive behaviour. When classifying *Child's Play* the Classification Office took account of such possibilities under s3(3)(a)(i) of the FVPC Act. The issue of offensive language has also been taken into account when classifying *Child's Play* and weighted accordingly. With regard to the alleged links between *Child's Play* and the James Bulger and Suzanne Capper murders, none were substantiated. Furthermore, there was no evidence of such a link produced in any of the criminal trials. However, the Classification Office concurs with the findings of a report by the British Home Office that there is a potential for violent videos to have a negative effect on some viewers, especially children and young persons. The Classification Office takes account of such issues under s3 of the FVPC Act.

OFLC Ref: 9700111